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Application No. 10/523,284

Docket No.: 12810-00017-US

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A process for removal of the an esterification catalyst by separation from a crude plasticizer ester obtained by reacting a dicarboxylic acid with a C₈-C₁₃ alcohols alcohol, by treating the crude ester with an aqueous alkali solution in the range from 10 to 100°C and then separating the aqueous alkaline phase comprising the hydrolyzed esterification catalyst by gravitational phase separation, which comprises treating the crude ester with a salt of a divalent metal or a polyvalent metal or mixtures thereof; prior to or during the phase separation, with a salt of a di- or polyvalent metal, or with a mixture of these salts.
2. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the esterification catalyst used comprises a Lewis-acid compound of an element of the 4th main group or of the 4th transition group of the Periodic Table of the Elements.
3. (Previously presented) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the esterification catalyst used comprises a compound of titanium.
4. (Previously presented) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein, prior to the gravitational phase separation, the crude ester has a content of from 0.1 to 5% by weight of monosalt of dicarboxylic half-ester.
5. (Currently Amended) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the salt used of a di- divalent metal or a polyvalent metal comprises a calcium salt or an aluminum salt.
6. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 5, wherein use is made of an aluminum salt.
7. (Original) A process as claimed in claim 6, wherein the amount of aluminum salt used is from 0.05 to 30 mmol per liter of the aqueous alkaline phase.
8. (Previously presented) A process as claimed in claim 2, wherein the esterification catalyst used comprises a compound of titanium.

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9. (Previously presented) A process as claimed in claim 8, wherein, prior to the gravitational phase separation, the crude ester has a content of from 0.1 to 5% by weight of monosalt of dicarboxylic half-ester.

10. (Currently Amended) A process as claimed in claim 9, wherein the salt used of a di-divalent metal or a polyvalent metal comprises a calcium salt or an aluminum salt.

11. (Previously presented) A process as claimed in claim 10, wherein use is made of an aluminum salt.

12. (Previously presented) A process as claimed in claim 11, wherein the amount of aluminum salt used is from 0.05 to 30 mmol per liter of the aqueous alkaline phase.

13. (Currently Amended) A process as claimed in claim 11, wherein said dicarboxylic acid is with C₈-C₁₁ alcohols the crude plasticizer ester is obtained by reacting a dicarboxylic acid with a C₈-C₁₁ alcohol.

14. (Previously presented) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the esterification catalyst used comprises titanium alkoxylates.

15. (Previously presented) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the esterification catalyst is Ti(O-ethyl)₄, Ti(O-isopropyl)₄ or Ti(O-isobutyl)₄.